

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 12, 16, 27, 37, and 56 to read as follows:

12. (Thrice Amended) A recombinant fusion polypeptide, comprising:

(a) a multivalent immunogenic portion wherein the immunogenic portion comprises at least two immunogenic polypeptides from Group A streptococcal M protein, the polypeptides comprising at least 10 amino acids and capable of eliciting an immune response against Group A Streptococci; and

(b) a carboxy-terminal polypeptide that protects the immunogenicity of the immunogenic portion, wherein the carboxy-terminal polypeptide is a reiteration of at least one immunogenic polypeptide from the amino-terminal of the immunogenic portion.

16. (Thrice Amended) The polypeptide according to claim 12 wherein the immunogenic portion consists of six immunogenic polypeptides, wherein the polypeptides are an amino-terminal portion of at least one Group A streptococcal M protein.

27. (Thrice Amended) A composition for promoting an immune response against Group A Streptococci, comprising:

(a) a recombinant fusion polypeptide, comprising:

(i) a multivalent immunogenic portion wherein the immunogenic portion comprises at least two immunogenic polypeptides from Group A streptococcal M protein, the polypeptides comprising at least 10 amino acids and capable of eliciting an immune response against Group A Streptococci; and

(ii) a carboxy-terminal polypeptide that protects the immunogenicity of the immunogenic portion, wherein the carboxy-terminal polypeptide is a reiteration of at least one immunogenic polypeptide from the amino-terminal of the immunogenic portion; and

(b) a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.